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Archives Head Denies FDR Papers Were Withheld From Historians

James B. Rhoads, head of the National Archives, yesterday denounced as "false and malicious" the accusation that presidential papers have been improperly withheld from historians at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, N.Y.

Rhoads denied any impropriety in the case of Dr. Richard P. Traina, dean of Wabash College in Indiana, who has said that 16 or so FDR letters were denied to him, but turned up later in a three-volume compilation of Roosevelt's foreign-affairs papers prepared by a Hyde Park staff member and published earlier this year by the Harvard University Press.

Rhoads also labeled as "utterly without foundation" the charges raised earlier by a Rice University historian, Dr. Francis L. Loewenheim, who has asserted that Hyde Park documents were kept from him. also.

Rhoads told reporters that the letters withheld from Traina were kept private for reasons specified in the original bequest of the documents, such as contents including defamatory remarks to living persons or threatening to the national security.

The letters sought by Traina were written by Claude Bowers, FDR's Ambassador to Spain in the period from 1933 ot 1937. Rhoads said that in January of 1967, when Traina last asked for the documents, some of them were still rated as private. Later that same year, the chief archivist said, the library's review committee decided that all of the Bowers letters could be made available to researchers.

Rhoads could not say precisely when all of these letters were cleared for public inspection and he said no records are kept of the reasons for granting them clearance. Likewise, no attempt was made to inform Traina that the letters denied to him earlier were now available because, Rhoads said, the archives staff is not large enough to handle such chores.

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